



The **HAVA Bulletin**

An Update on the Help America Vote Act

Visit our website at www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/

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CVR Data Conversion Process Begins

The Central Voter Registration System (CVR) is in development and will be online by January 1, 2006. The Secretary of State will provide all municipalities with the necessary equipment and training to use the CVR. The Secretary of State will also work closely with municipalities over the next nine months to implement the system. A major part of the CVR project is the collection of current voter registration information from each of Maine's municipalities and the conversion of that information into the format required by the CVR. Since December 2004, the Elections Division has been collecting and reviewing municipal CVR Information Surveys to determine what type of system each municipality is using to maintain voter registration data. The surveys indicate that about 20% of municipalities are currently using an entirely paper-based process, while about 80% of municipalities are using some form of electronic system to store part or all of the voter information. For each of these major categories, the general process for data conversion is described below.

Municipalities with Electronic Voter Registration Data

The CVR conversion team has begun reviewing each type of electronic voter registration system and is preparing detailed instructions for each municipality to use in providing the data to the State. Each municipality will participate in three cycles of data conversion to ensure that the voter registration information is correct and complete. The first cycle allows the data conversion team to analyze the information and report any data errors or inconsistencies. The second cycle is used for testing as well as to identify and report any new or unresolved data errors and issues. By the third cycle, all data issues should be resolved and the data will be loaded into the new CVR by the data conversion team.

Cycle 1 will begin over the *next 14 days* as each municipality receives specific instructions from the State. Each municipality will be asked to provide the data conversion team with a copy of all voter registration information in a manner described by the instructions as soon as possible, but no later than one week after receiving the instructions. By the end of April, the data will be analyzed and reports will be issued to each municipality along with instructions on how to use the reports. Municipalities will have approximately one month to review reports and address data issues.

Cycle 2 will begin in mid-May when municipalities will be asked to provide a second round of their voter registration information for further verification and testing.

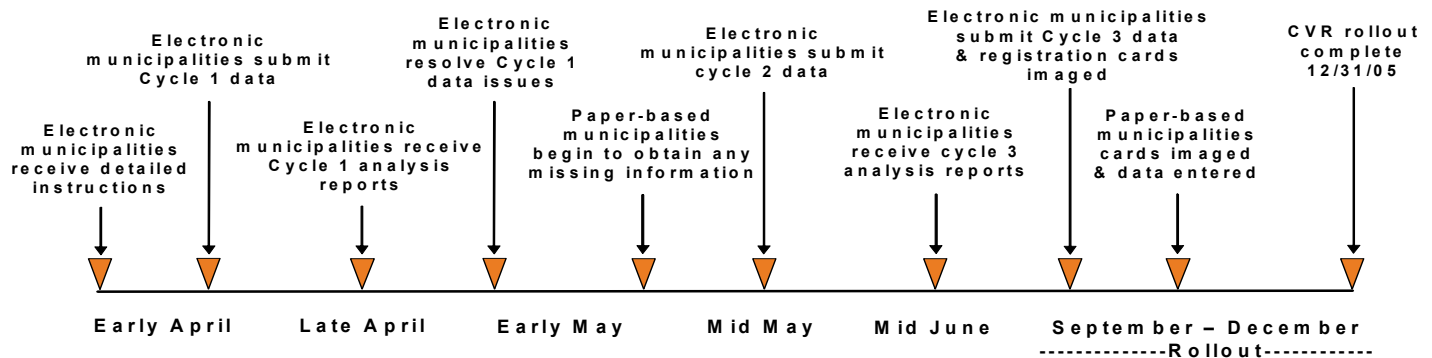
Cycle 3 will begin based on the rollout schedule for each municipality to start using the CVR, and will take place between September and the end of December, when all municipalities will begin using the CVR system.

Municipalities with Paper-based Voter Registration Data

For municipalities using an entirely paper-based process, voter registration data collection and conversion will take place between September and December 2005. The CVR data conversion team will schedule a time during that period to visit each municipality and scan voter registration cards. Within five to seven days after the cards are scanned, the data conversion team will enter information for each voter record into the CVR database and provide reports to the municipality to identify any missing information or potential errors. Over the next few months, municipal election officials will be provided with a list of information required for the CVR so they can verify that records are as complete as possible before the records are scanned.

More information is available at the HAVA Website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/.

CVR Data Conversion Timeline



Data Conversion - What's Next?

- Within the next two weeks, each municipality with electronic voter registration information will receive a set of easy-to-read instructions, detailing next steps specific to its current system of voter registration. The instructions will include contact information to assist with any questions.
- *eHarbor*: Within a day or two after receiving instructions, municipalities that provided e-mail addresses in their survey responses will receive a message from *eHarbor*, with the subject "Central Voter Registration (CVR) - eHarbor Login Information". This message contains login information for the State's data migration web portal. *Please save this message.*
- It is important that municipalities send in voter registration information within a week of receiving the instructions.

At Work For You: The CVR User Group

The planning for a statewide Central Voter Registration System (CVR) has been ongoing for quite some time. Preliminary work was done leading up to the selection of the vendor, Covansys Corporation/PCC Technologies, late last fall. Once the vendor was selected and there was a core system to review, we asked for help from the election officials (clerks and registrars) who will be the key users of the CVR. Many individuals came forward to offer their time and expertise to the CVR implementation effort.

In December 2004, the User Group was created when a representative group of clerks and registrars was invited to thoroughly review the core system. These dedicated municipal officials provided first-hand knowledge and suggested changes needed to meet current law, rules and procedures for the State of Maine and to streamline routine tasks. The User Group consists of sixteen individuals from both large and small municipalities from around the State, representing the diverse manner in which voter registration and related responsibilities are conducted at the local level. Over the past couple of months, Johnnie Meehl, the State's CVR Functional Manager, and other members of the Elections staff have used the information provided by the User Group to work with Covansys to ensure that the CVR will be designed in a manner consistent with Maine's laws and processes. These design changes have now been fully documented. On March 31st, the User Group met again and reviewed decisions, process changes and areas of concern so that Covansys can further develop an efficient system. In addition, we have asked the User Group to be part of the necessary User Acceptance Testing (UAT) that will take place over the summer months to ensure the system works properly for all functions, is user friendly, and will allow election officials to streamline their work.

We extend our sincere thanks to the members of the User Group for their continued help and commitment to this effort. Their time is greatly appreciated and the benefits of their involvement will surely help us all to realize a smooth transition to the CVR.

HAVA Accessibility Goals: Making Elections Open to All

In addition to CVR requirements, one of the prime objectives of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) is to ensure that polling places and voting equipment throughout the country are accessible to people with disabilities. The federal law specifically requires that by January 1, 2006, each polling location contain at least one piece of voting equipment accessible to people with disabilities, including low vision and blindness. The equipment must allow all voters to cast their ballots privately and independently. In addition, HAVA made funds available to states to assist with meeting the polling place accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Maine has made significant progress in each of these areas.

Accessible Voting Equipment

Using federal HAVA funds, the State plans to centrally purchase a sufficient number of accessible voting machines to provide one accessible voting machine for every polling place in the State. State election officials have been working with a stakeholder group including disability advocacy organizations, municipal clerks and registrars, technology experts, individuals with a range of disabilities and others to evaluate different accessible solutions and equipment. We will continue to monitor new developments in the voting equipment industry and evaluate potential solutions. Additional information relating to this effort will be forthcoming.

Polling Place Accessibility

Last year, with the assistance of municipal clerks and registrars, the State utilized available HAVA resources to conduct a comprehensive polling place accessibility survey. As a result, numerous municipalities have made improvements or are considering solutions to address barriers identified through the survey. Many municipalities have not yet filed the *Polling Place Solutions Report* with the Division of Elections, and we understand that solutions may be considered and confirmed through your budget process. We urge clerks and registrars to remember to forward this report to us as soon as decisions have been made. The new CVR will contain a module for maintaining polling place information, including an accessibility section in which election officials will be able to track accessibility concerns. The system will incorporate information gathered through the accessibility survey, along with information contained in the solutions reports. With this information readily available in the CVR, municipal election officials will be able to monitor accessibility issues and plan for removal of barriers at polling locations more easily.

Q & A's

Q. Should I conduct a purge of my voter list now, before the data conversion process?

A. It is not necessary to conduct a purge of your voter list prior to the data conversion process. During the data conversion phases and prior to statewide implementation, the consolidated statewide list will be reviewed for removal of duplicate and deceased voters. However, any clean up of your list prior to the conversion process will reduce the amount of voter records you will need to reconcile during data conversion.

Q. Will the State be conducting the purge process after the system is in place?

A. The State may utilize the National Change of Address (NCOA) program to start the purge process. It has not yet determined how much of the process might be done at the State level before handing off final determination of voter disposition to the municipal officials. Municipalities may need to conduct targeted mailing purges for their own voters, but with a central system we anticipate a much cleaner list.

Q. What are DREs?

A. DREs, or direct recording electronic voting machines, are one type of accessible voting equipment. HAVA requires at least one DRE or other type of accessible voting equipment at each polling location. The State plans to centrally purchase the necessary equipment. Municipalities will not need to purchase the equipment, and will receive additional information about this topic in the coming months.

Additional Q & A's are posted on the HAVA Website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/.

Questions about CVR or HAVA?

Website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/

Email: sos.office@maine.gov

Phone: 624-7650 (Elections Division)

